

US Route 501 Regional Coalition

May 23, 2007

The regular meeting of the US Route 501 Regional Coalition was held at the Community & Economic Development Conference Room, County Office Building, Rustburg, Virginia on May 23, 2007.

Those Present:

Ron Lovelace, Bedford County, Chairman
Mike Davidson, Campbell County
Paul Harvey, Campbell County
R.E. Abbott, Halifax County
Jimmy Absinth, Halifax County
Don Austin, VDOT (Appomattox)
Jeff Kessler, VDOT (Salem and Lynchburg)
Bob White, Region 2000
Debi Porter, Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce
Zoe Miles, Georgia Pacific

Also Present:

Rebecca Schwarz, Campbell County, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Ron Lovelace called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm, and at his request, Mr. Davidson gave the invocation.

Upon review of the minutes, on a motion by Mr. Davidson, seconded by Mr. White, and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the October 25, 2006 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Report

// Mr. Davidson reviewed the financial report. He noted that there has not been much financial activity since the October meeting. Most transactions have been for the website and website domain charges. The balance in the account as of today is \$22,961.36. We have received dues from everyone for this fiscal year. The dues for next fiscal year will be due after July and billed in August or September.

Old Business

// Mr. Lovelace next discussed old business. Work has been completed on the US Route 501 / 917 intersection project in Naruna. Mr. Austin said everything went very smoothly. Mr. Lovelace asked what the reactions have been to the changes made at the 24 intersection in Rustburg. Mr. Austin said he has received both positive and negative feedback, but overall the whole job turned out well and the added turn lane helps. He said he believes there have been more positive comments than negative ones.

// Mr. Lovelace next discussed the list of 501 Coalition priorities. Some projects on the list we cannot complete until far in the future. The question is whether to remove from the list those projects that are on our long-term wish list. Mr. Davidson explained that we discussed projects 1-9 in October, projects 10-17 VDOT ranked and recommended, and project 18 Jerry Lovelace from Halifax suggested we add as a safety project recommendation. General discussion of the projects and their locations followed. A suggestion made which received a positive response was

that we complete projects based upon the amount of funding made available in comparison to the individual project costs.

Following discussion of the projects, Mr. Davidson asked that the coalition adopt an official priority list which we can post on our website. We can change their order if VDOT recommends a different order following its evaluation of all eighteen projects. Upon a motion by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Harvey, and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the 501 Coalition adopted the priority list of projects (see attached).

Mr. Absinth commented on Project 11. He said that Halifax is currently working on a project to rebuild 642 from US Route 501 to 57, and it is looking for ways to incorporate a turn lane on 501. Mr. Absinth said we may be able to include this under the same contract as Project 11. This Halifax project is currently scheduled for advertisement in 2011.

// Mr. Lovelace asked if there are any other projects on the table. Mr. Austin said there are none in Campbell County. Mr. Absinth said they are rebuilding the Bannister River Bridge east of the 360 / 501 intersection, but at this point the project limits do not approach that intersection. The funding for that bridge replacement is federal. There have been discussions of trying to tie the intersection into this project, but this is prohibited from a funding perspective. Jeff Kessler said that the town of Halifax has an interest in putting a round-about at the intersection of 501 and 360. General discussion followed.

// Mr. Lovelace asked if the coalition has any concerns to express. Ms. Miles said Georgia Pacific has continuing concerns with Route 501. She said that the widening of curves about five years ago has helped to reduce the number of trucks that overturn or get stuck. However, due to the longer length of trucks now, the best routes to come to GP are illegal. The legal routes, on the other hand, present problems. These roads have not been improved, so the curves are not good. The trucks need permits to travel 122 to Bedford, and most do not know to get one ahead of time. A major problem is the parkway bridge that crosses 130. The sign lists clearance at 13 feet, 5 inches, but in actuality, the clearance is higher. For this reason, the truck drivers frequently believe their trucks will not fit through when they really can. They have no way to turn around due to the narrow road, and oftentimes they see the clearance sign, hit the breaks, and jackknife. Ms. Miles said this is a horrible accident waiting to happen. She asked if a study could be done to find a solution. She asked if GP should ask for an exemption from the restrictions placed on trucks traveling on 501 and give up the 130 route. The truck drivers believe 501 is the safest way to travel from Lynchburg. Discussion followed and various solutions were suggested and discussed. Mr. Austin recommended Ms. Miles write a letter to Dale Grigg and Richard Caywood, two district administrators for Salem and Lynchburg, regarding this problem. He also recommended sending a copy to Ken White.

// Mr. Lovelace asked if there were any other road priorities to discuss. There were none. The coalition will send out a list of the adopted priorities to VDOT and the localities involved in order to keep everyone aware of the priorities in case funding becomes available.

New Business

// Next the 501 Coalition discussed the newsletter. Mr. Davidson said that last time we had Blair Marketing do the newsletter, and that was in Fall 2005. He recommends we have a newsletter ready by September or October. He also recommends that we have the same committee as last time. A tri-fold newsletter cost \$5000 with Blair Marketing in 2005. This time it will cost more due to postage increases. Mr. Lovelace asked for any objections, and with none, it was agreed to proceed with plans to send out a newsletter in the fall.

In addition, Mr. Davidson discussed that Blair Marketing is our webmaster for the 501 Coalition website. It will likely cost \$300-400 for the update, as we have not updated our website in quite some time. He then described various updates that are needed.

// Mr. Austin gave the VDOT Update. He said we have reviewed much of the information already during the meeting. He gave hand-outs on the proposed six-year plans for Salem and Lynchburg, which can be found on the website. The majority of the funding will go towards the Lynchburg project on Route 460, between the Madison Heights by-pass and Route 501. General discussion of the plans followed.

He discussed the new transportation bill. The new statewide transportation will cost between \$377 - \$421 million, and there is currently a \$300 million maintenance deficit. General discussions of the bill followed.

Mr. Austin directed the coalition to the VDOT website to find more information on its projects and updates.

// The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, September 26th, 2007 at 2:00pm, in the Campbell County CED Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

// As matters from committee members, Mr. Davidson asked that we discuss at the next meeting transferring administrative duties to one of the other localities, as Campbell County has overseen the administrative duties for two years. Mr. Lovelace said we will put this make this and the election of officers as agenda items for September. This way people will have advance notice that these matters will be voted on and that participation from all the localities will be important.

With no further matters to discuss, the US Route 501 Regional Coalition adjourned at 2:58 pm.

U. S. Route 501 Coalition

Top Priorities

5-23-07

- 1. Construct Rt. 501/29/460 Lynchburg/Rustburg Bypass (Southern leg)**
- 2. Straighten curves from Eagle Eyrie to Coleman Falls (Bedford)**
- 3. Construct eastward bypass from Rt. 360 to Rt. 501 (Halifax)**
- 4. Construct interchange at Rt. 501 & Rt. 221 (Lynchburg)**
- 5. Construct southern bypass from Rt. 501 to Rt. 58 (Halifax)**
- 6. Widen road from Judith Creek Bridge to Eagle Eyrie to 36'; provide truck climbing lane northbound (Bedford)**
- 7. Four-lane Rt. 501 from just south of Rt. 615 to Campbell County (Halifax)**
- 8. Four-lane Rt. 501 from Brookneal to Winfall (Campbell)**
- 9. Improve Rt. 501 from Boonsboro to Eagle Eyrie through phased projects (Bedford)**
- 10. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 628: construct right and left turn lanes. (Halifax)**
- 11. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 642: construct right and left turn lanes. (Halifax)**
- 12. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 633: (northern intersection) provide northbound left turn lane. (Campbell)**
- 13. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 933: provide northbound left turn lane. (Campbell)**
- 14. Evaluate Intersections of Routes 652, 635 with 501 in Gladys. (Campbell)**
- 15. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 360 in town of Halifax: signalize and install left and right turn lanes. (Halifax)**
- 16. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 633 (southern intersection) provide southbound left turn lane. (Campbell)**
- 17. Intersection of Route 501 and Route 917 (Northern entrance) provide northbound left turn lane. (Campbell)**
- 18. Sydnor-Jennings Elementary School (approximately 0.5 mile South of Volens); construct right and left turn lanes. (Halifax)**